

Celebrating the Veteran in My Life  
By Alicia Schroeder---Caledonia Elementary School  
First Place K-5 Division

My Uncle JJ was a veteran for that I'm very proud.

Men and women in the  
Armed Forces get appreciated  
by a crowd.

My uncle traveled to six different places. So I  
say he is tough as a brick.

I know the war was hard on him, but he is  
the best uncle I would pick.

He was honored with eight different medals  
for serving our country.

He liked to receive packages and letters and  
he waited for them monthly.

The war was rough, because  
he lost a lot of his good friends.

I hope no one else has  
to fight in a war.

I hope all wars come to an end. My Uncle  
JJ makes his home in Caledonia, Minnesota  
today.

Command Sergeant Major Reimer  
By Hailey Jurgenson---Kennedy Elementary School in Willmar  
Second Place K-5 Division

My Papa was in the Army  
My Papa was in the Vietnam War  
My Papa was a mechanic in Da Nang  
My Papa fought for America

My Papa came home and got married  
My Papa changed to the Army National Guard  
My Papa had a full time job  
My Papa became a dad

My Papa went to drill once a month  
My Papa played softball  
My Papa worked hard  
My Papa taught my mom how to water ski

My Papa retired from the military  
My Papa served for 21 years  
My Papa was a good soldier  
My Papa made America a better place

My Papa became a Papa  
My Papa loves to build things  
My Papa loves M&Ms  
My Papa loves to pretend to be a monster

My Papa came to my school in his uniform  
My Papa taught my class about his ribbons  
My Papa told my class what he did in the military  
My Papa taught my class how to fold the American flag

I think my Papa is hilarious  
I think my Papa is amazing  
I think my Papa would do anything for anyone  
I think my Papa is my hero

When My Daddy Is Gone  
By Jonas Gerold---Eagle Creek Elementary School-  
Shakopee  
Third Place K-5 Division

When my daddy is gone,  
I can't shake the feeling,  
Of pain in my heart,  
Way beyond healing.

He's so far away,  
Yet he feels so near,  
There's a hole in my heart,  
Where he used to stay.

He's been on three tours,  
Leaving me in tears,  
Yet I feel so proud,  
as he protects our shores.

We make many sacrifices,  
While he serves our nation,  
Leaving an empty spot at the table,  
Feeling like it will never be filled.

Yet I felt so sad,  
So alone and forgotten,  
I know that one dawn,  
He'll be packing his bags,  
And that's how I feel,  
When my daddy is gone.

**Soldier by Day Brother by Night**  
**By Payton Larson---Morris Area Junior High School**  
**First Place 6-8 Division**

My brother is a 91 fox in the Army National Guard  
He taught me that there is more to this world  
And to RESPECT others.  
Basic Training came,  
I thought I'd never see my real brother again,  
I thought he was going to change in a bad way...  
But I was wrong.

Coming back from Basic Training and AIT  
He changed, but for the better.  
We use to do stupid things  
But he taught me that it's not right

He showed me that listening when told to  
Doing things when asked  
It will have a big effect on your life.  
He showed me that bullying isn't ok  
Because some day,  
The bully could take an innocent American's life  
My brother told me that if you give respect  
Then you shall receive respect  
It was true

He taught me to treat others the way you want to be treated  
Listen to what others have to say  
Try to always give an extra hand  
Put yourself in their shoes  
You never know what's going on in their day

Celebrating a Veteran in My Life  
By Nick Logeland---Monticello Middle School  
Second Place 6-8 Division

Proud that he was in the Air Force and served during the Korean War

Always joking around; amazing sense of humor I take after him

Patriotism, loved his country, loved the American flag and what it represents

Aerospace quality engineer at Control Data for 40 years

Really loved music, was a drummer in several bands

Organization skills. Papa always had a place for something

Died 4-16-16, miss you & love you papa

## Gone

By Emma Fuhrman---Morris Area Junior High School

Third Place 6-8 Vision

### Gone

22 months apart

You always stayed in my heart

Dad, I love you

You fought to keep me safe

You are my biggest inspiration

My motivation to keep fighting

My home away from home

To keep me safe and sound

Even though you weren't around

You missed special days

But the most important day

The day you came home

### Gone

22 months apart

You grew even more dear to my heart

You saw indescribable sights

While I turned out the lights

I went to sleep

Feeling safe knowing you were fighting for me

Thank you for teaching me strength

To keep my head up when times were tough

You were just and average person

But then you became more

You are a hero to all

My biggest inspiration is you

Thank you Dad, for all that you do

## Her Hands

By Logan Kooistra---Jackson County Central High School  
First Place 9-12 Division

Her hands are rough and worn  
    Scarred, calloused;  
Her fingernails are ripped and dirty  
    And are caked with dirt and  
        grease  
    And I know  
Her hands have taken lives.

    Forty years ago,  
    She cut her hair  
And she lied about her name  
    And her identity  
And she left her home  
    To join up  
And be shipped across the seas.

    Forty years ago,  
    She was stationed  
And she fired her gun  
    And she killed  
And she got those scars  
    To protect  
And be remembered.

    Forty years ago,  
    She was a strategist  
    And she planned  
    And she organized  
And her plans helped us win  
    To give me a future  
And serve her country.

    Forty years ago,  
    She was a hero.

But today?

The war took fifty-eight thousand  
    lives,  
    And the time took her mind,  
And the disease took her hair,  
And the battle took her heart.

She sits alone in a communal  
    home,  
Facing an eastward window  
Cloudy eyes staring blankly  
    ahead,

Like she always does these days,  
Her hands daintily folded on her  
    lap;  
Those hands are anything but  
    dainty.

Her mind is a battlefield of  
    memory lost  
Stolen by disease and by time  
But while there's nothing left in her  
    head,  
Her hands tell a different story.

Her hands took lives;  
Her hands made plans;  
Her hands saved lives;  
Her hands were strong.  
Because that's what it took to win  
    the war:

A woman's hands.

Heroic  
By Craig Feist---East Central Secondary School in Finlayson  
Second Place 9-12 Division

His sun-weathered face bears a smile  
His hands, leather-tough, grasp mine  
His eyes, deep and thoughtful,  
Fill up by the dropful  
Our embrace, the first in a long time

Last we met I was too young  
To understand all he would say  
But now we discuss  
Developing trust  
Our time slowly passing away

He recounts to me all of his stories  
From back when he was at sea  
The friends lost and gained  
His resolve growing strained  
He becomes a new person to me

A silent calm fills the space  
As he finishes speaking his piece  
I believe every word  
Never have I heard  
Tales of such greatness as these

As I depart sadness grips me  
For I wish this time would not end  
But with hug and a shout  
Of goodbye I'm without  
The companion I'll soon meet again



My Veteran  
By Faith Schadewald---East High School in Duluth  
Third Place 9-12 Division

You ask me who is my veteran?  
Who is my number one hero?  
Would it matter if he never fought?  
Maybe he shot a couple cannons here and there.  
Maybe he sucked at shooting M16's.  
Six months of basic training at Fort Sill Oklahoma,  
Four years of National Guard.  
Is he still a veteran to you?  
Or do you not care?

What if I told you that he's my veteran,  
Not just because he served,  
But because he is my father.  
Because he's a great man who works hard,  
Pays the bills, and pays his taxes.  
He puts food on the table everyday.

Deep down he is still serving this country.

He doesn't need to be perfect at hand grenades,  
Even though he never missed a target...  
And he doesn't need to be perfect at the 50 caliber either...  
Even though he was.  
He's my hero because he's a true patriot!  
He stands up for what he believes in.

My veteran is not naive,  
Or snobby or arrogant.  
After all Drill Sergeant Johnson said,  
You are a type of man who can save a life.  
I would take 100 of you, over 100 of those arrogant soldiers!  
My hero is humble and wise.

He's a man who's grateful for what he has,  
Whether it's small or large!

You tell me to write about a veteran who served,  
And I did.  
But there's more to this man.  
He may have served his country at one point in his life,  
But that's not the only reason why he is my hero.

He's my comfort and my rock.  
He always believes in the best when things get tough.  
My father is my veteran, my hero,  
Not just because he served,  
Not just because he is my father.  
He is my hero because of who he is today.